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# Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2472

Aug. 17, 1990

**EDUCATION KEY TO RURAL REVIVAL** -- Rural schools can help strengthen the economy of their communities by helping residents understand & adapt to the changing world & participating directly in community development. "Rural communities cannot hope to achieve a steadily improving standard of living without creating jobs that will keep their better educated young people at home," says USDA Social Scientist J. Norman Reid. Expanding schools' responsibilities without diminishing the services they currently provide will increase educational costs. Contact: J. Norman Reid (202) 786-1520.

**WATERMELON INDUSTRY FLOURISHING** -- After a period of decline, the U.S. watermelon industry is flourishing. And, consumers now seem more satisfied with the product, says USDA Economist Gary Lucier. Over 50 varieties of watermelon are currently available. Watermelon offers impressive nutritional benefits that far outrank those of the cantaloupe, papaya, orange, grapefruit, banana or apple. A typical watermelon is 88 to 92 percent water and a 1 by 10-inch slice has 152 calories, no cholesterol and very little fat. Contact: Gary Lucier (202) 786-1884.

**AFRICANIZED BEE VENOM** is no worse than that of domestic honeybees. Contrary to some people's beliefs, USDA Scientist Justine O. Schmidt says, the Africanized honeybees have less venom than European bees & the venom is not more potent. What makes a difference is the larger number of stings by Africanized bees, Schmidt says. When the Africanized bees reach the U.S. from northern Mexico, "people should steer clear of their nests. These bees are extremely defensive when their nests are threatened," Schmidt says. Contact: Justine O. Schmidt (202) 670-6380.

**SHOE BOOM, SHOE BOOM** -- American's are wearing more and more expensive leather sports shoes made from the hides of U.S. cattle. Most of the shoes are made in East Asian countries, especially South Korea. This process has given a strong boost to a previously low-profile farm export commodity. Kansas leads the nation in exporting hides -- and these exports are larger (at \$305 million in fiscal year 1988) than those of the state's live animals & meat (at \$294 million that year). Contact: Christine Bolling & Lawrence Duewer (202) 786-1712.

**WHEAT HARDNESS TESTING** -- USDA is making wheat hardness testing using near-infrared reflectance (NIR) spectroscopy available in Destrehan, La.; Kansas City, Mo.; Omaha, Neb.; Pasadena, Texas; and Portland, Ore. USDA will not charge for the test and is making the testing available as part of continuing research into using NIR spectroscopy to determine grain quality. Those who want to have wheat tested for hardness should contact their local Federal Grain Inspection Service field office. Contact: Allen Atwood (202) 465-3367.

**GILLUM APPOINTED** -- Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter has announced the appointment of Charles R. Gillum as deputy inspector general. Gillum has served as inspector general of the Small Business Administration since 1987. Before that, he was deputy inspector general at the General Services Administration. He graduated from Arizona State College & Arizona State University. Contact: Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623.

**THERMAL FABRIC ATTRACTS LICENSES** -- A small Iowa firm & one of Japan's largest companies have been licensed to develop products using polytherm -- a USDA patented process that makes fabrics that will warm you when you're cold & cool you when you're warm. USDA Chemist Tyrone L. Vigo and colleague Joseph S. Bruno invented the fabric treatment. NeutraTherm, Inc., of Des Moines, will develop ski clothing & other sportswear; Mitsui & Co. of Tokyo will make sportswear and biomedical products for sale and use only in Japan. Contact: Tyrone L. Vigo (504) 286-4487.

**MONITORING FOR PESTICIDE RESIDUES** in America's food supply showed that in 99 percent of the food there either were no detectable residues or that the detected residues were below EPA tolerance levels, says a Louisiana pesticide safety specialist. "Consumers must understand that food safety is not an absolute nor is it a clear either/or proposition," says Mary Grodner. "Safety is a point on a continuous line and that point may be moved by social, economic, political and legal issues, as well as by our understanding of the science of toxicology." Contact: Mary Grodner (504) 388-4141.

**COMPUTER MODEL FOR WEATHER** -- C.W. Richardson can't promise it won't rain on your Labor Day picnic. But, he & his "Weather Generator" can give you a better idea of the likelihood of a party-dampening downpour. Richardson, a USDA ag engineer, says his computer model has become "reasonably accurate" in considering past weather patterns on which to base a forecast. The model can calculate "a sequence of weather that's as likely to occur as any other sequence at a given site." Contact: C.W. Richardson (817) 770-6500.

**LO-SUGAR SHAKE** -- By mixing water, non-fat dry milk, cream & other ingredients, USDA scientists have developed chocolate & vanilla shakes that contain only 6 percent sugar. A typical milkshake has 10 to 12 percent. When served from a milkshake machine, the beverage has the texture of milkshakes. Contact: Virginia Holsinger (215) 233-6703.

**CHECK YOUR LABEL** -- Is the label correct on your Farm Broadcasters Letter? Is the name right? How about the address? Please take a minute to check now. If you find an error, please send your label, with corrections to: Farm Broadcasters Letter, USDA R-TV, Room 410-A, Washington, DC 20250. We want to make our mailing lists as accurate as possible.

### FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

- AGRICULTURE USA #1732** -- For the fourth consecutive year, California is suffering from drought. On this edition of Agriculture USA, Pat O'Leary talks with California farmers & ranchers about the drought & how they're coping with it. (Weekly 13-1/2 minute documentary.)
- CONSUMER TIME #1214** -- Egg safety; from cane to crystal; snacking -- America's past-time; getting "hyper" about shopping; making your home water efficient. (Weekly consumer features 2-1/2 to 3 minutes long.)
- AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1721** -- USDA News Highlights; some egg producers face restrictions soybean surprises; rice -- a benefit crop; fish farming. (Weekly news features.)
- NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1333** -- B vitamins & antidepressants; copper & the immune system; mold & cancer; new peaches released; plum breeding. (Weekly research feature stories.)
- UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Fri., Aug. 24, livestock update; Mon., Aug. 27, dairy yearbook; Tues., Aug. 28, U.S. export outlook, crop/weather update; Wed., Aug. 29, ag income & finance outlook; Thurs., Aug. 30, tobacco situation; Fri., Aug. 31, ag prices.

**DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.**  
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

### FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE (Week of Aug. 16, 18 & 20, 1990)

- FEATURES** -- Pat O'Leary reports on harvest safety; Will Pemble takes a look at research on potato production; Lisa Telder examines farm respiratory problems.
- ACTUALITIES** -- Allan West, with USDA's Forest Service, gives an update on the forest fire situation in the west; USDA Chief Meteorologist Norton Strommen gives current weather & crop update; USDA World Board Chairman James Donald examines crop production estimates; Lonnie King, with USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service, on interstate movement of eggs.
- NEXT WEEK** -- Pat O'Leary takes a look at "Agriculture in the Classroom."

Available on Satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY . . . . . 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D (Channel 23)  
SATURDAY . . . . . 10:30 - 11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D (Channel 19)  
MONDAY . . . . . 8:30 - 9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D (Channel 23)



**OFFMIKE**

**THIRD CROP...**of hay is being harvested in Minnesota, Cliff Mitchell (KASM, Albany) says. The dry weather of August helped development and producers are using every baler in the region to get the hay in. The area was short of hay so this year's crop is very welcome. Cliff says prices will be down considerably.

**COFFEE SHOP...**talk centers on how the farm bill will shake out, says Randy Rasmussen (KMNS, Sioux City, Iowa). Among other concerns, producers are worried that fuel costs will rise at harvest time because of the Iraq crisis. Crops are about two weeks behind schedule there, Randy says. Early frost is another worry, but for now, the crops look good and yields should be high.

**LOSS OF SALES...**has Louisiana rice producers concerned, says Don Molino (Louisiana Agri-News Network, Baton Rouge). Iraq usually bought about 25 percent of the state's rice crop. Rice harvest is underway and yields are expected to be high, which will further depress prices.

**Farm Broadcasters Letter**

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**GOOD GRASS...**in south central Texas has cattle producers happy and is the result of July being the wettest on record, says Bill McReynolds (WOAI, San Antonio). But drought conditions in May and June killed half the grain sorghum crop and allowed only a fair wheat crop.

**BLUE MOLD...**on tobacco in sections of central Kentucky will result in weight loss and reduced returns, says Allen Aldridge (Kentucky Agrinet, Louisville). Recent rains saved the corn crop. Allen says because beans were planted late last spring due to wet fields, growth is behind schedule. This is similar to the situation in northern states and beans could be damaged if it frosts early.

**ADVICE FROM EC...**Stop calling BSE -- bovine spongiform encephalopathy -- "Mad Cow" disease. Jamie Kaestner, (National Cattleman's Association, Englewood, Colo.) says EC officials report "Mad Cow" is a lightning rod for media attention, ill-founded public outrage and fright.

  
**VIC POWELL**  
Chief, Radio & TV Division